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THE MANUFACTURE OF ORGANIC CHEMICALS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

BEFORE the outbreak of the present war, a large percentage of all the organic chemicals used in this country, which included dyestuffs, developers and drugs, as well as the substances needed exclusively in scientific research, were imported from Europe. The largest part of these chemicals came from Germany and as soon as trade relations with that country were broken off shortly after the war began, it was necessary for the United States from that time to depend almost entirely upon the small stock on hand. An immediate growth in the chemical industry in this country took place and manufacturers were busy filling the demand, first, for the simpler substances as phenol, aniline and beta naphthol, then the more complex substances as hydroquinone, aspirin, salol, amidol, etc. Recently commercial concerns have been working, and are at present working, upon the more fancy chemicals, particularly among the dyestuffs and drugs. Until within the last six months, however, no attempt has been made to prepare either the complex organic chemical reagents needed in analytical work or substances used exclusively in scientific research. The supply of such chemicals in this country in 1914, held chiefly by large distributing houses and university laboratories, was considerable so that by careful conservation on the part of the universities and greatly advanced prices on the part of the distributing houses, a serious lack of these compounds was not felt until this last year. Nevertheless, for the past two winters it has become necessary in universities where large amounts of organic chemical research have been carried on, for a student to spend a considerable part of his time which under normal conditions would be devoted to original investigation, in preparing various